

PRESS RELEASE - 13 March 2026

**MARGARET KARRAM RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT
ROBERTO ALMADA, ARGENTINE FOCOLARINO WHO IS A PRIEST,
IS THE NEW CO-PRESIDENT**

With over two-thirds of the votes cast by participants at the General Assembly and a long round of applause, Margaret Karram was re-elected yesterday, 12 March 2026, as president of the Focolare Movement for a second term (2026-2031).

"With the grace of God and the help of all of you, I accept. I was deeply moved in today's liturgy by Psalm 94: "O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts". In response to this new call, I renew my "yes", my full commitment to God together with all of you, at the service of the Church, the Movement and humanity."

These were Margaret Karram's first words, just minutes after her election as President of the Focolare Movement on the 12th of March 2026, for a second five-year term.

She was re-elected by the 261 participants with the right to vote, representing the Focolare communities from all five continents, who are taking part in the General Assembly from the 1st to the 21st of March.

The new Co-President is Roberto Almada, an Argentine focolarino who is a priest, who was also elected by a two-thirds majority. He succeeds Jesús Morán, who has completed his second and final term (in accordance with the [Decree](#) of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life of the 11th of June 2021).

"I accept this election with the grace of God and the protection of the Virgin Mary," said Almada, "and I will give it my all, with my strength, my intelligence and my heart; you can count on me!"

The elections were confirmed by the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, as the competent authority of the Holy See, in accordance with the General Statutes of the Focolare Movement (Work of Mary, Articles 79 and 88).

Margaret Karram, a life dedicated to dialogue

Margaret Karram is the third President of the Focolare Movement, after its foundress, Chiara Lubich. She succeeded Maria Voce in 2021. Maria Voce passed away on the 20th of June last year.

Margaret is a Christian Arab born in Haifa, Israel, she grew up in a multi-religious environment, developing from a young age a strong commitment to dialogue between different cultures and faiths. She graduated in Judaism from the American Jewish University in Los Angeles (USA), before taking on positions of responsibility in the Movement in the Holy Land, while also working for 14 years at the Italian Consulate General in Jerusalem.

Internationally recognised for her contribution to interreligious dialogue – Mount Zion Award (2013) and Saint Rita Award (2016) – she participated in the Invocation for Peace in the Vatican Gardens in 2014 with Pope Francis and the Israeli and Palestinian presidents. She was elected President of the Focolare Movement for a first term in 2021 and has strengthened the Movement's action in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. She met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople and participated as a guest in the recent Synod of the Catholic Church.

In 2023, she was appointed Member of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life. She has travelled to Asia, the Americas, Europe and the Pacific to meet with Focolare communities and organisations engaged in interreligious dialogue. Among her most recent visits were Genfest 2024 in Brazil, the peace forum in the United States in 2025 and the international conference for the tenth anniversary of *Laudato si'*. Co-author with Monica Mondo of the book *Per non sfiorarci invano* [So as not to pass each other by in vain] (2023, Ed. Francescane), in 2025 she published *Prossimità, via alla pace - Pagine di vita* [Closeness, the path to peace - Pages of life] (Ed. Città Nuova), dedicated to the culture of fraternity and dialogue.

Roberto Almada is the new Co-President of the Focolare Movement

Roberto Almada is an Argentine focolarino who is a priest, psychiatrist and psychotherapist. With a doctorate in philosophy, he was one of the promoters of the School of Logotherapy in Uruguay and Paraguay. He is part of the group that coordinates spiritual and psychological accompaniment programmes at the Sophia University Institute for Latin America and the Caribbean and at the Logos Institute in Caserta (Italy). His pastoral activity has focused on the family through the New Families Movement, where he follows projects accompanying couples.

Author of the book *El cansancio de los buenos* [The Weariness of the Good], which explores the dynamics of burnout and has been translated into several languages (in Italy: "Il burnout del buon samaritano" [The Burnout of the Good Samaritan], published by Effatà), and co-author of *Desafío Parejas* [The Challenge of Married Couples], both published by Ciudad Nueva.

He served as a councillor at the International Centre of the men focolarini in Rocca di Papa (Italy) from 1999 to 2009. Until 2026, he lived in Buenos Aires, working for the Movement in the Southern Cone in the areas of evangelisation, supporting local communities where he facilitated processes of reorganisation, of cohesion and of study.

He has gained considerable experience in ecclesial and educational settings across various Latin American countries, including Colombia, El Salvador, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina; supporting priests, religious communities and Catholic teachers through courses and spiritual retreats, with a particular focus on offering support during times of

pastoral burnout and helping them rediscover the meaning of their mission. He has also worked in youth ministry and in the social sector with migrants.

Role of the President of the Focolare Movement

According to the General Statutes, the Presidency will always be entrusted to a woman focolarina who has taken perpetual vows: a choice that reflects the lay and female leadership envisaged by the foundress, Chiara Lubich, and confirmed by Saint John Paul II. The President is called to accompany, "in a spirit of unity", the Focolare communities present in 150 countries, which embrace the Gospel message of universal fraternity within a context of cultural, social and religious diversity. Her tasks include guiding and directing a movement that addresses the local and global challenges of our time and is called in particular to heal the personal and social divisions of humanity. The Statutes also outline the way in which the President is to exercise her responsibility: a leadership based on service and Gospel-based charity, in accordance with Jesus' invitation to be a servant to all (see Mark 10:44). She is called to be a bridge-builder, a promoter of unity and a witness to the central message of the spirituality of the Focolare Movement, acting as its spokesperson with coherence and dedication.

The task of the Co-President

The Co-President – elected from among the focolarini who are priests in the Focolare Movement – is called first and foremost to work in close collaboration with the President, sharing decisions with her and helping to ensure the Movement's discernment and unity. Alongside this primary role, the Co-President collaborates in the general guidance of the Movement, offering his input on the most significant issues and ensuring that the life of the Movement is fully in line with the faith and doctrine of the Church.

The Assembly of the Focolare Movement continues

Over the coming days, the Assembly shall also elect the Focolare Movement's new governing body – the general councillors, who will serve as the President's closest collaborators – and shall discuss proposed amendments to the General Statutes. On the 21st of March, the participants and observers of the Assembly will be received in a private audience by Pope Leo XIV.

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